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ABSTRACT

To evaluate the effectiveness of their program for preparing elementary school teachers, Western Oregon State College collected data from 13 first-year elementary school teachers recommended for certification in 1986. Information was collected on beginning teachers' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the general preparation received, current teaching assignment, involvement with microcomputers, and selected demographic variables. The teachers ranked themselves and the preparation program fairly highly in all the variables assessed, including planning and preparation, performing instructional functions, classroom management, knowledge of subject matter, evaluation of instruction, communication skills, work with handicapped students, interpersonal relations, and computer skills. Strong agreement was seen by the teachers' cooperating principals. First-year teachers did, however, show concern about the amount of material, content, and the fairly rapid pace of the instructional program although the data indicated a high level of satisfaction with the teacher preparation program at Western Oregon State College. (The questionnaire is appended.) (CB)

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# How'd We Do?

## A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS RECEIVING BASIC CERTIFICATION IN 1986 FROM WESTERN OREGON STATE COLLEGE

by
Dr. Norman E. Koch

Elementary Education Department

Western Oregon State College

This study supported in part by Professional Development Funds awarded by the Provost's Office, Western Oregon State College, Monmouth, Oregon

April, 1987

SP 028 725

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**Introduction:**

The elementary teacher education program at Western Oregon State College has a long history of systematic data collection on the field performance of its students. Beginning in 1970, data has been collected in elementary classrooms throughout the mid-valley region. This data on student performance has been analyzed to guide the direction of the Western Oregon instructional program to certify entry-level teachers. At WOSC, this performance data has been collected on individual lessons taught and in a full week experience preceeding student teaching. The student teaching experience of WOSC students has also been systematically analyzed and the data used to further assess competence for entry-level certification. Data were also used to evaluate the on-campus curriculum for the college student and served as the basis for many curriculum changes.

Additional data, however, were necessary to determine if campus based instruction and programs are meeting the needs of the real world in an elementary classroom. To assemble data from the real world, several follow-up studies of teachers receiving initial certification from WOSC in elementary education have been conducted. Studies were conducted in 1974, 1975, and 1976. The most recent follow-up study took place in 1981. Each of these studies have resulted in significant on-campus program revisions and adjustments. These include additional training in reading, added emphasis on the profesional role of the teacher, specific teaching strategies, and extended field experiences prior to student teaching.

## Current Study

This study was designed to collect data from first year elementary teachers recommended for certication in 1986. Information was requested on the effectiveness of the general preparation received, current teaching assignment, involvement with micro-computers, and selected background, demographic information. Questionnaires were mailed to 34 elementary teachers identified by the WOSC Career Development Center as being employed in the public schools. An additional consideration was that certification was recommended by WOSC during the 1985-86 school year. Questionnaires were also requested from the principals responsible for supervising these beginning teachers. A total of 17 questionnaires were returned by teachers. However, 4 were not included since those teachers were employed as specialists in various areas of special education. Twelve (12) principals returned the questionnaire. It had been hoped that a higher percentage of return would have been achieved, but previous follow-up studies listed a similar return ratio.

The following specific research questions were the major focus of the study:

1. How do first year teachers view the effectiveness of their general preparation?

2. How do first year teachers view their preparation in specific areas of elementary education?

3. How do first year teachers view their competencies in the use of computers?

4. How do first year teachers perceive their general level of competence?

5. How do first year teachers rate the extent to which WOSC contributed to that perceived level of competence?



6. How do principals view the effectiveness of the WOSC first year teacher?

## Description of the Teacher Sample:

Of the 13 respondents, 6 were at Western Oregon only for certification, 6 reported themselves as community college transfers, 2 were joint degree students from Willamette, and only 2 had attended Western for four years. This number does not add to 13 since some fit in more than one category, primarily as community college transfers. This finding is similar to previous studies that show an increasing percentage of the students in professional education transfer to WOSC at the junior, senior or post-bacculaurate level.

The first year teachers reported the following:

Teach their own Art - 8 Handicapped Learners in their room - 7

Teach their own PE - 2 Teach their own music - 0

The variation in teaching assignments and responsibilities above support the inclusion of specialized training in art and the handicapped. However, from this sample, little support can be generated for physical education or music. Four (4) teachers reported being involved in curriculum development committees, textbook selection committees, and other professionally related activities. Twelve (12) reported being members of the Oregon Education Association or other professional associations. Less than one-half (6) of the sample listed any membership in community organizations. Class size ranged from 21 to 28 pupils and the average was 25.5. Ten (10) reported teaching in schools with an enrollment under 400 pupils, and only three (3) were employed in schools larger than 400 pupils.

Eleven of the 13 teachers surveyed were very satisfied with the teaching profession. Only one respondent reported being dissatisfied. Six teachers definitely plan to seek additional training related to their teaching area, while three others indicated the possibility of pursuing specialties in an undetermined area of education. No one indicated they were actively seeking a career change at this point.

## DATA ON PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

The first year teachers were asked to mark, on a seven point scale the number that best described their level of competence, and the extent to which Western Oregon State College contributed to their performance in nine clearly defined areas. The supervising principals of these teachers were asked to assess the performance of the first year teachers on the same nine areas. The scale was presented as follows:

**1.Minimal Competence** **4.Competent in Most areas** **7.Very Competent**

1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7

The results of this portion of the study will be discussed on the following pages. Each of the nine areas will be dealt with as they were presented on the questionnaire. Open-ended data from both the teachers and the principals will be discussed in the appropriate section of the report.

### PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR INSTRUCTION:

This area dealt with lesson planning. The questionnaire described this area as:

> ***Lesson planning, writing goals and objectives, able to provide for individual differences, interests, cultural background, abilities of students, knowledge of resources available, able to state learner outcomes that relate to stated objectives, able to plan sequential learning activities as they relate to stated objectives.***

The following chart presents three sets of information. The first bar is the perceived level of competence as reported by the first year teacher. The middle bar represents the extent to which the teachers felt WOSC contributed to their perceived competence. The third bar represents the supervising principals perception of the competence of the teacher. (All nine variables will be presented utilizing this same format.)

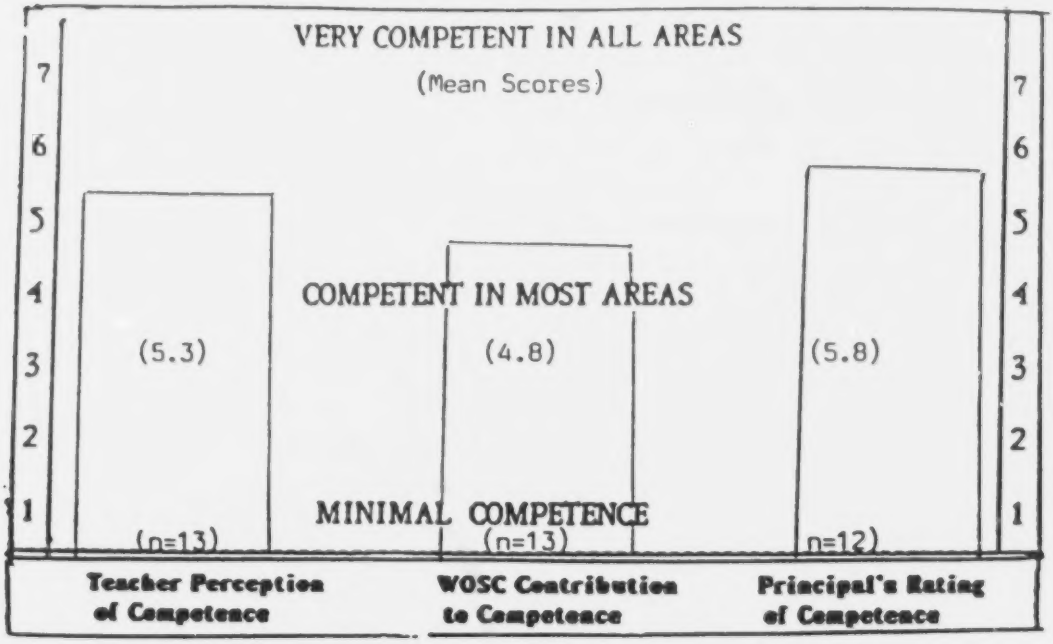



**Table** 1. Planning and Preparing for Instruction

Teachers recommended for certification by WOSC rank themselves fairly high in their competence to plan and prepare for instruction. Their supervising principals assess them even higher. The teachers rank the contribution of the college a small amount lower, yet even this rating is above the mid-point of the scale. One weakness in this area identified by two of the sample was that too many plans and units were prepared and never used. They did not mind the planning activities if the material was to be used in peer teaching or in an actual classroom setting. The principals mentioned several times that planning skills of the first year teachers was a real strength. The teachers ability to locate and actively seek outside

resources to supplement their teaching appears to be adequate. The data examined indicate a high level of competence.

PERFORMING INSTRUCTIONAL FUNCTIONS

The first year teachers rated their competence to perform instructional functions as quite high. This area was defined as:

> ***I am able to: use a variety of materials and activities in teaching to a stated objective, implement sequential learning activities that build on prior lessons, adjust to pupil responses, terminate a lesson with a review, a synthesis, or other actions that bring it to a proper close.***

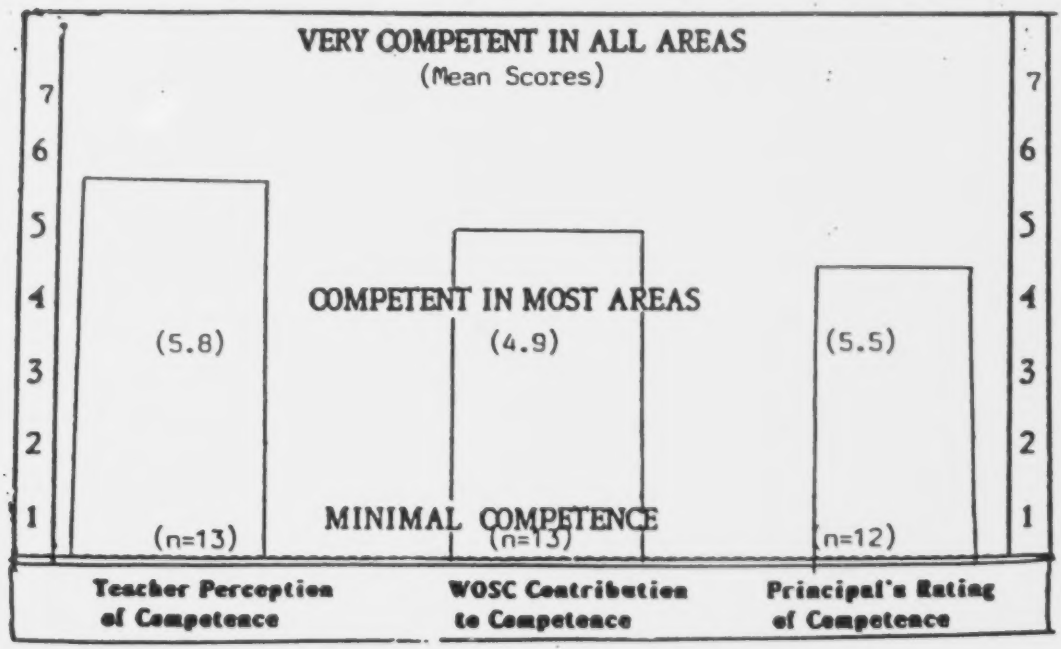


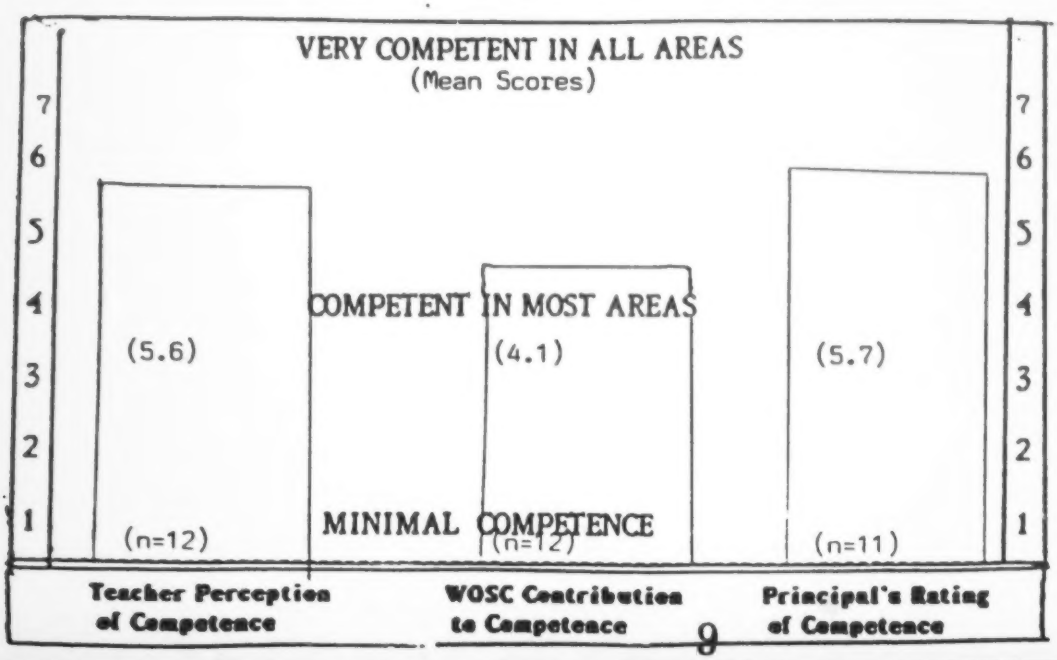

**Table** 2. Performing Instructional Functions

The contribution of WOSC to this competence was among the highest rankings received by the institution. This is rewarding since so much professional effort is directed at the teaching act during the professional phase of the preparation program. Principals concurred in this relatively high rating. They specifically identified instructional skills as teacher

strengths with specific reference to the teachers' ability to involve students in classroom activities. The ability to utilize questionning strategies in the classroom was also mentioned by the supervising principals. The teacher-identified strengths included the on-campus exposure to so many different teaching techniques they received. Many teachers commented on the close, personal supervision they received that assisted them to hone and refine their teaching skills in an actual classroom. The principals, however, did mention some weaknesses they had noticed. The first-year teachers need even more training in specific instructional delivery systems. Teachers also need more background in designing or using a variety of approaches with children of differing learning styles. The data provides support for the instructional efforts of the college. The relatively high scores demonstrate the usefulness of the on-campus program to the needs of the first-year teacher.

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

***The classroom management competency was defined as: I am able to : generally keep students on task and working toward lesson objectives, deal with disruptive behavior and keep it short-lived and isolated, keep undesired pupil responses to a minimum and make adjustments in my content and style.***






Table

The teachers' perception and the principals' rating of competence on this important aspect of a teacher's performance is nearly identical. Teachers felt that WOSC contributed fairly heavily to the competence they felt. Teachers felt that the program should provide more emphasis in the area of management, and provide some practical coursework in the area. One-third of the prinicipals mentioned the management skills of the first year teacher as an area of strength. The data indicate that the institution is doing an adequate, if not superior, job in this area.

KNOWLEDGE OF SUBJECT MATTER

The questionnaire did not seek highly specific information on all the different courses taken by the first year teacher. It was purposely kept very general due to the many areas of responsibility required of an elementary teacher. The variable was defined as:

***This area pertains to all subject areas you are teaching***

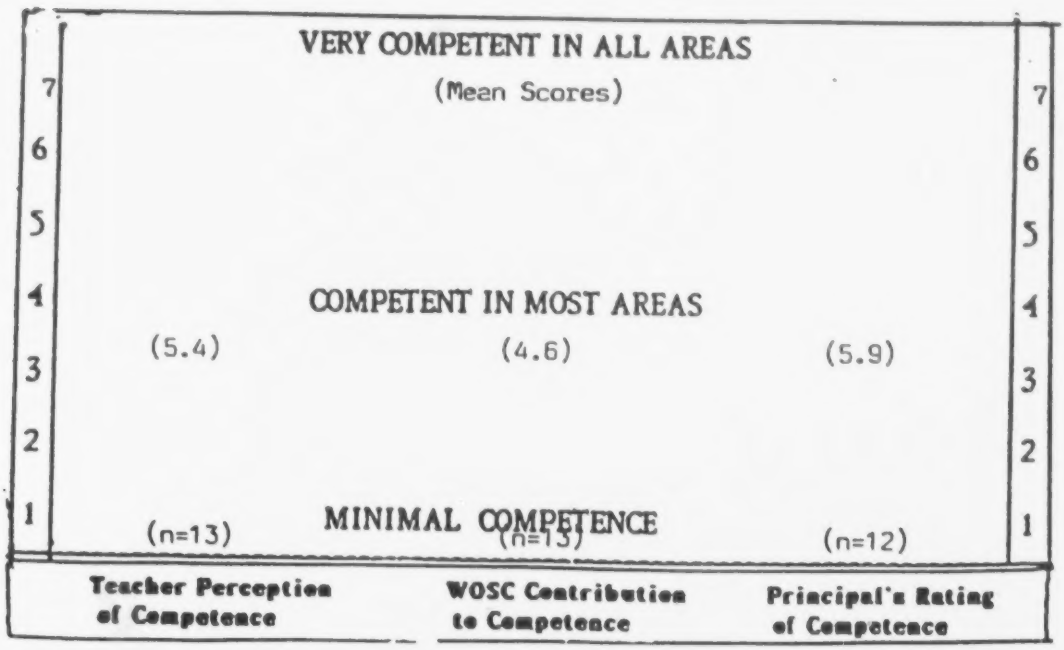



**Table 4.** Knowledge of Subject Matter

Teachers felt they were competent in at least most areas of the curriculum. The principals concurred, and WOSC made a sizeable contribution to the feeling of competence. Several teachers mentioned children's literature as a real strength. Principals mentioned the teachers' background in math and reading -- two as a strength, and two as a weakness! The teachers, however, identified several weaknesses in the area of subject areas they are responsible to teach. Training in specific curriculum areas designated as weak were music and social studies. The music identification is surprising since no teacher reported teaching their own music. Also, the social studies requirement has recently been changed. There was a call for both more and less math. There was a request for more reading, and to move the reading content out of the block program. The request for more reading was fairly general throughout the sample. One teacher suggested that more rigor is needed in block. He/she stated that "... the preparation was too narrow and repetitive...'.too much time spent on values clarification/ find yourself stuff and not enough on teaching techniques" In summary, knowledge of subject matter was adjudged at a satisfactory level. Certain areas of concern were identified. Although the number involved in this study is small, attention must be paid to the concerns expressed.

EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION

The following table clearly shows the relatively high competence of the WOSC first-year teachers to evaluate the results of instruction. This variable was defined as:

> ***I am able to: write measureable objectives for stated objectives, write measureable items stated as intended learner outcomes, communicate to students their achievement performance at frequent intervals, track student's achievement as they progress through their learning activities.***

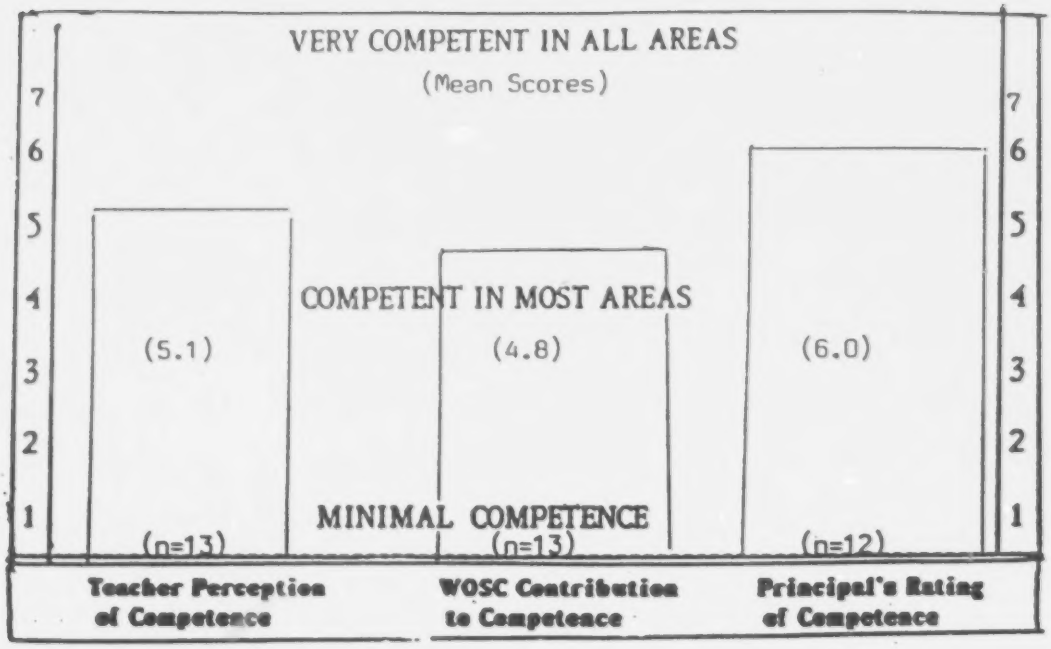



**Table 5.** Evaluation of Instruction

Very little open-ended data was volunteered by the sample. Only a few principals suggested that this an area of strength from the first-year teachers, and one designated it as a weak area. None of the teachers offered any comments. The data presented in chart form graphically shows that the first year teachers are generally competent.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

This variable was defined as:

***This area includes your competence in handwriting (blackboard, letters to parents, memos to colleagues, etc.), spelling, sentence structure, etc., speaking, and non-verbal communication.***

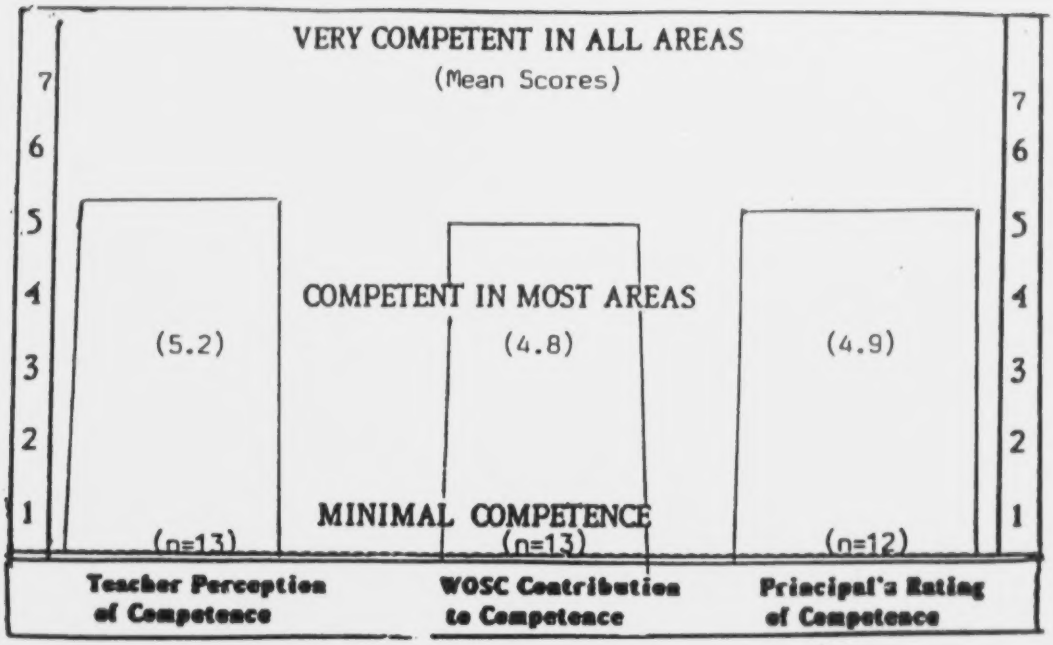



**Table** 7. Handicapped Students

**The high rating attributed to this variable is surprising since teacher candidates are not required to demonstrate competency in writing an IEP. However, a portion of their training deals with the process of developing and implementing an IEP in an elementary classroom. They are also assessed on their ability to meet the needs of children with special needs. Two principals commented favorably on the teacher's ability to relate to children of all populations. Another suggested even more work on dealing with children with emotional problems. First-year teachers from WOSC are generally competent in dealing with handicapped students.**

## INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

**First year teachers perceived of themselves as very competent in Interpersonal Relations. This important variable was defined as:**

***This area relates to your relationships with students, faculty, administration, parents, and the people in the community.***

identified by the teachers and principals. The above-mentioned attributes are rarely taught, they tend to be internalized modes of behavior that can be nurtured --not mandated by academic decree. Teachers certified by WOSC appear to possess the interpersonal skills principals deem important.

COMPUTER SKILLS

This variable is a new addition to the follow-up studies. Some initial data were gathered during the last academic year to document the use of micro-computers in the teacher preparation program at WOSC. For this study, Computer Skills were operationally defined as:

> ***This area relates to you personal skills with computers. Can you operate and use a computer with your students? Can you design your own programs? Also, can you use one for record keeping etc.? (data were collected on the number of computers in the school, availability to pupils, and teacher use)***

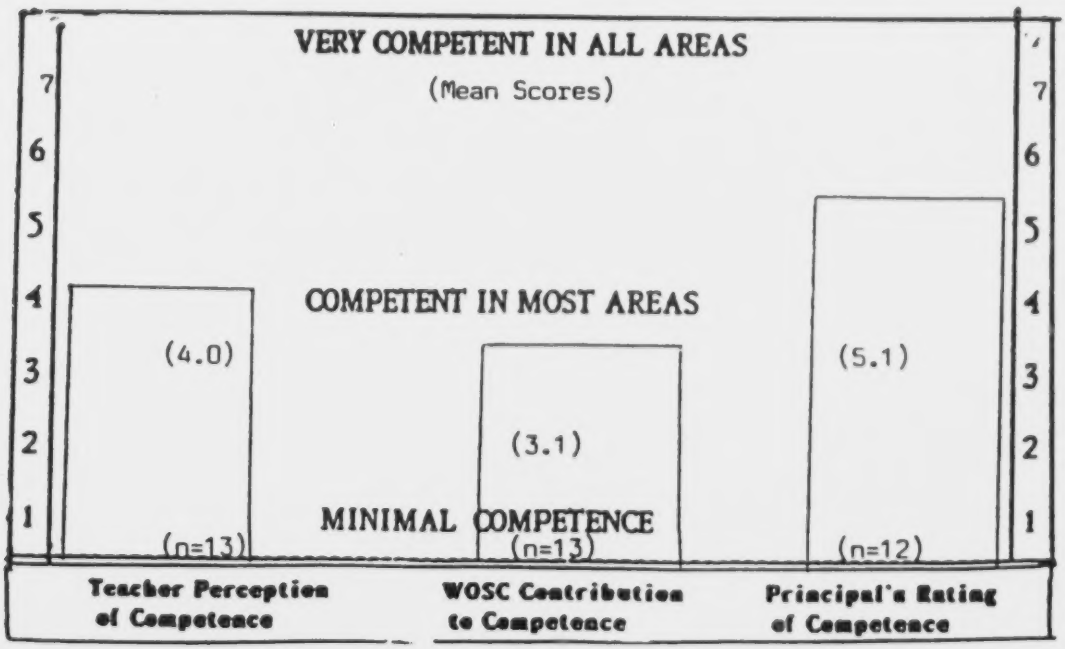



**Table 9** Computer Skills

This variable received the lowest ranking of the nine variables investigated. This is not a surprise. Computer literacy as a requirement has only recently been completely institutionalized. There is also a wide gap between "literacy" and the ability to use computers in a classroom with children. Teachers, however, did rate themselves as competent in most areas, and the principals rated them even higher! The low rating given to WOSC'S contribution to the teachers' competence is consistent with an earlier study that showed many students have acquired computer skills prior to formal enrollment in college level courses. Nearly one-half of the teachers recommended more work and training in the use of computers in the classroom. The principals did not make any specific suggestions. The average number of micro-computers available in the sample schools was 10. The lowest number was 4, and the highest reported 18! The machines were available to pupils at least two hours a week for free activity and instruction. The micro-computers were used in a variety of ways. Children used them for practice, drill, and game-type activities. Seven of the teachers reported using the micro-computer primarily for word processing and/or record keeping.

Steps have already been taken to improve the technical knowledge of teacher education candidates at WOSC. Students are now required to complete an expanded course in educational technology and its application in the classroom. Students do programming and application-activities with direct transfer to the world of the elementary classroom. It is anticipated that future follow-up studies will show an increasing level of competence in computer skills of first-year teachers recommended for certification from WOSC.

GENERAL PROGRAM STRENGTHS

Teachers and principals were asked to provide additional responses on the general strengths and weaknesses of the training program. The comments discussed earlier in the report were identified with specific questionnaire items. The general program strengths identified by the first-year teachers included:

...the many, varied, and wonderful public school experiences

...the class size in sponsor groups, and sponsor groups themselves

...close, supportive, and humane supervision from college staff

...the amount of quality contact with the elementary faculty

...the enthusiasm for teaching evidenced by WOSC faculty

...the caring atmosphere at WOSC

When the basic objectives of the WOSC (then OCE) were being developed in the early 1970's, a commitment was made to a competency based, field-centered, and personalized teacher education program(COMFIELD). This concept received a national award in 1974 from AACTE. It is very interesting to note that the participants in this follow-up study have identified as program strengths the three components of that effort in the 70's. The first-year teachers continually commented on the close relationship with the faculty as structured around sponsor groups. These groups usually number 17 - 19, and are centered around the pre-service teachers field experience in the public schools. Advising, counseling, supervision of teaching, and a very close staff-student relationship characterize sponsor groups. All foster personalization. It appears that those very strategies that earned OCE a national award in 1974 are the same program strengths first-year teachers in 1987 feel are of primary importance.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The following table shows the results of the survey on the nine variables. The three sets of ratings are remarkedly similar.

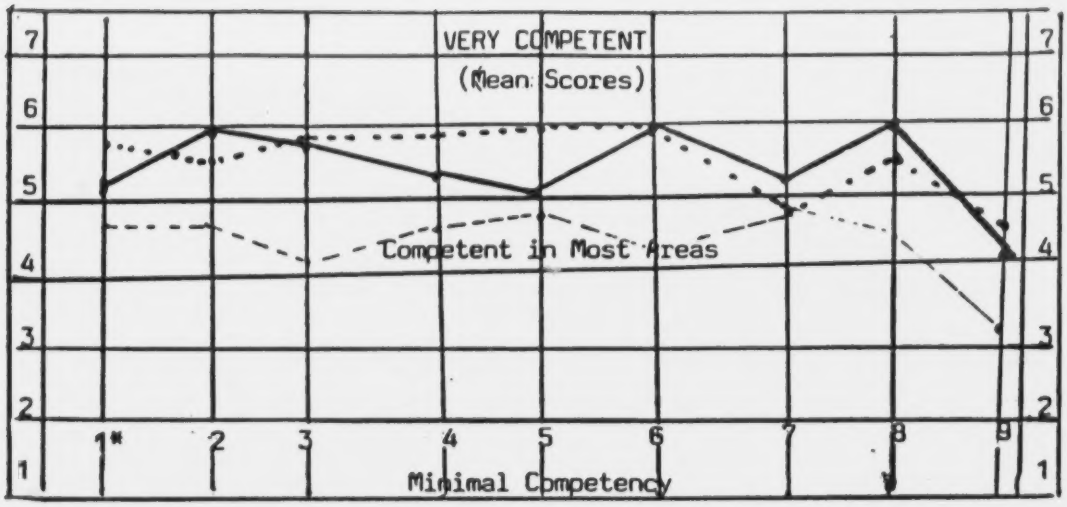



Table 10. Summary of rankings on the nine variables. (Teachers' perceptions designated by ———; WOSC Contribution - - - -; and the Principals' rating by . . . . . .)

* 1. Planning Preparation
2. Performing Instructional Functions
3. Classroom Management
4. Knowledge of Subject Matter
5. Evaluation of Instruction
6. Communication Skills
7. Handicapped Students
8. Interpersonal Relations
9. Computer Skills

The lowest score is typically that attributed to the extent to which WOSC contributed to the competency. Analyzing the individual ratings does not produce any major surprises. WOSC contribution is highest in planning and preparing, evaluation, and dealing with the handicapped. These four areas are major components of professional education. The large number of certification-only and transfer students in this study also influence this result. These are the areas that have been studied at WOSC. The low score in management is still at the "competent in most areas" level. Also, in previous follow-up studies, first year teachers have consistently urged increased effort on classroom management. The following areas of the contribution of WOSC are not as high as the above. Communication skills, interpersonal relations, and computer skills, are affected by many conditions. They are internal to the individual, highly personal, and the result of many experiences (academic and personal) that are not the domain of the elementary education department.

The data on computer skills are consistent with a study conducted last year which documented that a large number of WOSC elementary education majors mastered computer skills at home, in an office job, or in a previous institution attended.

The assessment of computer skills by teachers and principals deserves additional comment. These two assessments are two of the lowest reported. Yet, it is important to remember that they are still at the "competent in most levels" stage. This area is receiving increased attention on the college campus by all academic units. It is anticipated that future follow-up studies will document results at increasing levels of competence.

The relatively high rating given to the variables is rewarding to a faculty that has systematically attempted to design a program that meets the needs of an elementary teacher candidate. The strong agreement by the

cooperating principals is further evidence that the WOSC program continues to be effective. First-year teachers, however, are concerned with the amount of material, content, and the fairly rapid pace of the program. Comments related to this indicate a need to further examine the instructional load on students as they progress through the preparation program.

The data indicate a high level of satisfaction with the teacher preparation program at WOSC. There was no criticism or concern with specific areas in the curriculum except the general area of computer knowledge. The reasons for this are varied, but it still was adjudged as "competent in most areas."

It is recommended that a more extensive follow-up be conducted next year. A strong component, or major emphasis of that study should be an in-depth interview of the first-year teacher. The major drawback to the questionnaire method utilized in this study was the lack of opportunity to probe and clarify responses.

A final recommendation is to have the faculty in elementary education at WOSC examine the data from this study and use it as a major source of data as they redesign the preparation program. Many pressures exert their influence on curriculum design, yet the strongest input should be data from first-year teachers in the field and those individuals who supervise them.

# APPENDIX

School of Education
OSU/WOSC

A merged School serving Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College with graduate and undergraduate programs in Education.

February 5, 1987

Dear Graduate:

We are conducting a survey of our graduates to gain information about how well our teacher education program has prepared you for your employment. Will you take a few minutes to complete the survey form and return it in the enclosed envelope? The information you provide us will be used in evaluating our existing program and in making changes in the future. No individuals will be identified, However, group responses will be identified. The number on your questionnaire is to enable us to follow up if the first questionnaire is not returned.

Enclosed is a set of materials for your principal to complete. A self-addressed envelope has been attached for their convenience. Would you please pass them to your principal?

Thank you for your help. I hope you are enjoying your work in your new career. Please let us know if we can assist you in the future.

Thanking you in advance,

Norman E. Koch

Norman E. Koch, Professor
Elementary Education Department
(503) 838-1220, Ext. 235

NEK/ss



Department of Elementary Education
OSU Campus: Education Hall, Room 220E · Corvallis, Oregon 97331 · (503) 754-4841
WOSC Campus: Education Building, Room 202 · Monmouth, Oregon 97361 · (503) 838-1220 Ext. 216

School of Education
OSU/WOSC

A merged School serving Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College with graduate and undergraduate programs in Education.

February 5, 1987

Dear Graduate:

We are conducting a survey of our graduates to gain information about how well our teacher education program has prepared you for your employment. Will you take a few minutes to complete the survey form and return it in the enclosed envelope? The information you provide us will be used in evaluating our existing program and in making changes in the future. No individuals will be identified, However, group responses will be identified. The number on your questionnaire is to enable us to follow up if the first questionnaire is not returned.

Enclosed is a set of materials for your principal to complete. A self-addressed envelope has been attached for their convenience. Would you please pass them to your principal?

Thank you for your help. I hope you are enjoying your work in your new career. Please let us know if we can assist you in the future.

Thanking you in advance,

Norman E. Koch

Norman E. Koch, Professor
Elementary Education Department
(503) 838-1220, Ext. 235

NEK/ss



Department of Elementary Education
OSU Campus: Education Hall, Room 220E · Corvallis, Oregon 97331 · (503) 754-4841

FOLLOW UP OF WESTERN OREGON STATE COLLEGE GRADUATES - 1987

_____Teaching Minor/s (i.e. Reading Hand. Learner, Math, etc.)

I attended WOSC: No. of years: ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4

Transferred from _____ Com. College _____ 4-yr Inst.

Certification only _____

Teaching Assignment: (Elementary)

_____Grade level

_____I teach my own Art

_____I teach my own P.E.

_____I teach my own Music

_____I have handicapped students in class

_____List other major duties (coaching, committee assignments, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

Size of School

___ 0 - 100

___ 101 - 200

___ 201 - 300

___ 301 - 400

___ 401 - 500

___ above 500

Name of principal _____

Name of school: _____

Location: _____ City State Zip

Elementary

_____Class size

_____Average, if more than one class

I. General Information

The purpose of this follow-up study is to find specific strengths and weaknesses, so the college can modify its teacher education programs accordingly.

Listed below are a number of competencies that graduates from WOSC are expected to possess.

On the scale to the right, please mark the number that best describes your level of competence and how instruction at WOSC has contributed to your performance.

1. Minimal competence. 4. Competent in most areas. 7. Very competent in all areas.

Please make comments under each area.

| | Perceived level of competence | Extent to which WOSC contributed to your level of competence |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Planning & Preparation for Instruction<br>Lesson planning, writing goals and objectives, able to provide for individual differences, interests, cultural background, abilities of students, knowledge of resources available, able to state intended learner outcomes that relate to stated objectives, able to plan sequential learning activities as they relate to stated objectives. | _____<br>Comments | _____ |
| 2. Performing Instructional Functions<br>I am able to: use a variety of materials and activities in teaching to a stated objective, implement sequential learning activities that build on prior lessons, adjust to pupil response, terminate a lesson with review, a synthesis, or other actions that bring it to proper close. | _____<br>Comments | _____ |
| 3. Classroom Management<br>I am able to: generally keep students on task and working toward lesson objectives, deal with disruptive behavior and keep it short-lived and isolated, keep undesired student responses to a minimum and make adjustments in my content and style. | _____<br>Comments | _____ |
| 4. Knowledge of Subject Matter<br>This area pertains to all subject areas you are teaching. | _____<br>Comments | _____ |

School of Education
OSUWOSC

A merged School serving Oregon State University and Western Oregon State College with graduate and undergraduate programs in Education.

January 28, 1987

Dear Principal

We need to receive some feed-back from public school officials about our Teacher Education Program at Western Oregon State College. Would you take a fev minutes from your busy schedule to complete the enclosed survey form and return it to me?

The information you provide will be used to evaluate our existing Teacher Education Program and in making modifications for the future. Please feel free to make any additional comments not covered in this survey.

Many thanks for taking care of this chore and all the help you have given to our students and faculty over the years. You and your staff have been most cooperative and helpful in providing educational opportunities for members of our institution.

Sincerely,

Norman E. Koch

Norman E. Koch, Professor
Elementary Education Department

NEK/ss



Department of Elementary Education
OSU Campus: Education Hall, Room 220C · Corvallis, Oregon 97331 · (503) 754-4841

EVALUATION OF WOSC TEACHER EDUCTION PROGRAM

Purpose of study: To determine strengths and weaknesses so the college can evaluate and make necessary modification.

On the scale to the right please indicate how you think WOSC graduates compare with graduates of the other institutions.

1. Minimal competency
4. Competent in most areas
7. Very competent in all areas

Please circle appropriate number and make comments.

I.

1. Planning & Preparing for Instruction: Writing goals and objectives able to provide for individual differences, interests, cultural background, and abilities of students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Comments:

2. Performing Instructional Functions: Implement sequential learning activities, adjust to pupil response, use of a variety of materials, and activities.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Comments:

3. Classroom Management: Keep students on task and able to deal with descriptive behavior.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Comments:

4. Knowledge of Subject Matter: (Elementary: include all subject areas.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Comments:

5. Evaluation: Write measurable items--communicate to students their achievement performance. Able to assess student learning.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Comments:

6. Communication Skills: Handwriting, use of blackboard, spelling, sentence structure, speaking, listening, etc.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Comments:

7. Handicapped Students:
Plan, direct learning activities, write an IEP, evaluate, utilize resources, understand laws and regulations relating to education for the handicapped.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Comments:

8. Interpersonal Relationships:
Students, faculty, administrators, parents and members of community.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Comments:

9. Computer skills:
Utilize computers in teaching, record - keeping, etc.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Comments:

II.

1. List specific strengths of the new teacher:

2. List specific weaknesses of the new teacher:

3. Suggestions and comments for the college: